



King County

Wastewater Treatment Division

Industrial Waste Program

Department of Natural Resources and Parks

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Draft Fact Sheet: Sending commercial septage to King County's South Treatment Plant

How businesses and commercial facilities apply for approval

January 2008

Introduction

Some areas in King County are not served by the public sewer system that conveys wastewater to the county's sewage treatment plants. Instead, many residences discharge liquid wastes into on-site sewage systems (OSS). All waste from a residence is considered domestic waste and is not regulated by the King County Industrial Waste Program (KCIW). Some businesses, commercial facilities and industries also rely on on-site sewage systems to receive their liquid wastes. Many of these facilities have their septage tank wastes hauled to the King County's South Treatment Plant, the only county-operated facility that accepts these wastes. To protect our treatment plant and its biosolids quality, King County is now requiring that businesses, commercial facilities, and industries sending septage to the county's facility have approval to do so.

Who must seek approval?

Businesses, commercial facilities and industries that have process waste or hazardous wastes on-site that send septage to King County must obtain approval. Even when a business is not located in King County, if its hauler takes its septage to the county's treatment plant this process must be followed. Some facilities do NOT need to seek approval (like retail shops, elementary schools, and office complexes) if they have only sanitary facilities with sinks, toilets etc. connected to the septic system.

Some businesses that typically may discharge commercial/non-domestic septage that would need to go through the approval process:

- Auto repair shops, auto-body shops
- Beauty salons
- Beverage makers
- Dry cleaners, commercial laundries
- Food processors
- Furniture makers, furniture restorers
- Laboratories
- Machine shops, metal fabricators
- Medical offices (dental, medical, chiropractic, and veterinary)

Photo processing labs including one-hour minilabs
Print shops (printers, screen printers)
Junior/Senior High Schools
Vocational Schools/Colleges
Shopping malls, warehouse complexes, business parks

Some businesses that would not need to go through the approval process if they do not have process waste or hazardous wastes on site:

Athletic facilities
Elementary schools
Child care facilities
Retail Shops
Office complexes
Restaurants (excluding grease traps)

How to apply for approval

To help KCIW evaluate the characteristics of their waste, businesses planning to send septage to the county for treatment will need to complete a Septage Acceptance Application. KCIW evaluates and approves discharge of commercial septage based on the characteristics of the waste and its potential impacts on the county's treatment system. Potential impacts could result from septage containing:

- chemicals prohibited by Washington State's dangerous waste regulations, or;
- quantities of organics or metals that could inhibit the treatment plant's biological processes or contaminate the receiving treatment plant's biosolids.

As KCIW processes Septage Acceptance Applications, staff may ask applicants to have their septage tanks sampled for pollutants of concern, with the applicant responsible for costs. Applicants may need to show that they have properly disposed of pollutants (e.g. lead, mercury and silver) that could not safely enter the septage system. KCIW may also inspect businesses' facilities to better understand what processes are taking place at sites that could negatively impact septage quality.

For more information about sampling for pollutants and disposing of hazardous wastes see Resources below.

When KCIW gives approval for a business's waste to be hauled to the county septage facility, it will issue an approval letter with an authorization number. Businesses will need to provide this number to septage haulers. KCIW normally requires that businesses obtain an approval each time their septage is to be hauled to the county's facility.

How long does the approval process take?

Generally KCIW can process completed applications in five business days or less. KCIW encourages businesses to let it know about urgent requests.

What does the approval process cost?

Currently there is no charge for approvals.

How long is the approval good for?

Approvals are normally processed for each load that will be hauled to the county's septage facility. Under certain circumstances approvals may extend to additional hauled loads.

Can the hauler pumping our company's septage obtain the approval for us?

Businesses having commercial septage hauled to the county facility will need to contact and work directly with KCIW to obtain approval. Septage haulers may refer business customers to KCIW for approval when they arrange to pump tanks.

Do places like stores, day care centers and elementary schools need approval to discharge septage?

Facilities and businesses that have only sanitary facilities with sinks, toilets etc. connected to the septic system and that do not have process waste or hazardous wastes on-site do not need to obtain authorization to discharge to the county's septage facility. This category would include many retail shops, elementary schools, and office complexes. In these cases septage haulers follow a procedure of submitting the client's name, address and phone number to the county's treatment plant upon discharge of septage.

What are alternatives to sending commercial septage to the county's septage facility?

Businesses may not wish to apply for a permit to discharge septage, or KCIW might determine that a business's waste cannot be accepted at the county operated facility. In those cases businesses will need to find alternative disposal sites. They can find assistance by contacting septage haulers, local public health agencies or the Washington State Department of Ecology. (See Resources below.)

About Septage

What is septage?

Septage is the liquid and solid material pumped from septic tanks, which are also called on-site sewage systems (OSS).

What is the difference between residential or domestic and commercial or non-domestic septage?

Domestic (also referred to as residential) septage is any liquid or solid material removed from a septic tank, cesspool, portable toilet, Type III marine sanitation device, or similar treatment works that receives only domestic sewage. Residential/domestic septage does not include liquid or solid material removed from a septic tank, cesspool, or similar treatment works that receives either commercial wastewater or industrial wastewater and does not include grease removed from a grease trap at a restaurant.

Non-domestic (also referred to as commercial) septage is any liquid or solid material removed from an on-site sewage system that serves businesses, commercial facilities or industries, including restaurants. Businesses and industrial enterprises often discharge wastewater into a septage tank that contains metals or other chemicals not normally found in domestic septage. Common examples of process wastes from commercial activities include: mercury in dental office wastewater (from the amalgam fillings), silver in photo processor wastewater, inks and solvents from printing businesses and pharmaceuticals from veterinary and medical clinics. Industrial users, such as electroplaters, may discharge heavy metals.

Please note: While facilities and businesses that have only sanitary facilities with sinks, toilets etc. connected to the septic system and that do not have process waste or hazardous wastes on-site produce "commercial/non-domestic septage," they do not need to obtain authorization to discharge

to the county's septage facility. This category would include many retail shops, elementary schools, and office complexes.

Regulatory authority for septage

Commercial septage (including hauled industrial waste) that is delivered to the county's South Treatment Plant by truck is subject to federal, state and county regulation as provided in King County Code 28.84.060.

These requirements apply to septage from businesses or industrial facilities that have septage waste hauled to King County's South Treatment Plant septage facility for disposal. For a non-King County business whose hauler takes its septage to the county's treatment plant the information below will apply.

KCIW is proposing a King County rule clarifying the handling of commercial septage. Provisions include procedures that septage haulers and businesses must adhere to in order to discharge commercial septage at the King County Treatment Plant. When the rule is being reviewed for adoption KCIW will invite public comment. For more information about this process or to be notified of the public comment period see KCIW contact information below.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) for disposal of non-domestic waste streams

BMPs are methods that have been determined to be the most effective, practical means of preventing or reducing pollution from certain sources.

1. Segregate wastewater that contains chemicals and other hazardous substances from domestic sewage.
2. Place these wastes in a holding tank until they can be picked up by a licensed hazardous waste hauler and/or treatment facility.
3. Do not discharge these wastes into sinks, toilets, floor drains or storm drains.
4. Contract with licensed companies to dispose and/or treat the segregated wastewater.
5. Maintain all waste disposal records on site for at least three years, or since the date the septic tank was last pumped, whichever is longer.
6. Local governments have created BMPs for many business sectors, and these often include information about handling process wastewater. Contact your local small quantity generator or other programs providing technical assistance to businesses within county government. Go to Resources below for sources of examples.
7. Property owners can protect themselves and their investments by educating tenants and demanding that they run a clean business. Adherence to regulatory requirements can be a condition of the lease. Since the property owner is ultimately responsible for maintaining property value and for any contamination caused by a tenant, periodic inspections are also a good idea.

King County requires that businesses connected to the county's sewer system practice specific BMPs based on the category of business, such as dental practices, photo processors and medical offices with x-ray equipment. KCIW expects that businesses discharging commercial septage at King County's South Treatment Plant also employ the BMPs specific to the categories. These businesses should be able to demonstrate that they have employed these practices since the date the tank was last pumped.

For more information, contact KCIW (below.)

Contact:

For information on approval to discharge non-residential/commercial septage to King County

King County Industrial Waste Program (KCIW)

130 Nickerson Street, STE. 200

Seattle, WA 98109-1658

Phone: 206-263-3000 or TTY: 711

Fax: 206-263-3001

<http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/indwaste/index.htm>

Resources:

1. To locate septage haulers:

a. Contact the Washington On-Site Sewage Association (WOSSA) at:

WOSSA

P.O. Box 9279

Tacoma, WA 98490-0279

253-297-2837

wossa1@hotmail.com

www.wossa.org

b. Look in your local yellow page phone directory under “Hazardous Waste Vendors” or “environmental.”

c. Check King County’s Waste Directory at:

<http://www.govlink.org/hazwaste/business/wastedirectory/>

d. Or contact the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County for contact information see # 3.b. below.

2. To learn more about Best Management Practices for septage in King County:

a. Public Health - Seattle & King County’s Wastewater Program

Eastgate Public Health Center

14350 SE Eastgate Way

Bellevue, WA 98007

206-296-4932 or TTY: 711

<http://www.metrokc.gov/HEALTH/wastewater/index.htm>

b. The Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County:

Keiko Ii

Mike Kaufmann

401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1100

Seattle, WA 98104

Mike Kaufmann - 206-263-8460

Keiko Ii - 206-263-8456

<http://www.govlink.org/hazwaste/business>

3. For general information about on-site sewage systems:

a. See the Information for Business Users and Property Owners brochure, published by the Interagency Regulatory Analysis Committee (IRAC) of the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County.

[http://www.lhwmp.org/IRAC/publications/Septic%20Tank%20Guidlines2004.pdf](http://www.lhwmp.org/IRAC/publications/Septic%20Tank%20Guidelines2004.pdf)

b. Visit the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County's Business Internet pages: **<http://www.govlink.org/hazwaste/business/>**. Or call 206-296-3976.

c. To learn more about best management practices/pollution prevention tips for your particular industry visit the Washington State Department of Ecology's Hazardous Waste & Toxics Reduction Program's Pollution Prevention in Washington State Internet page:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/hwtr/P2/index.html>.

Washington State Department of Ecology's Hazardous Waste & Toxics Reduction Program

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